

Take a 'Tractor Test' ...And Win a Prize!

MANY farm folks have an "eye" for old tractors. Are you among them?

If you're the type who can spot a not-so-new tractor in a farm field or driveway and quickly identify it by make and model (and maybe even year), you'll love this regular feature!

Even if you know nothing about old tractors, you'll enjoy learning more in upcoming issues as we publish photos and figures from the books *Classic American Farm Tractors* and *Thoro'bred Tractors*. Each issue, we challenge sub-

scribers to identify familiar—and obscure!—farm tractors from past decades.

Join the Fun! For this Collector's Edition we've selected a tractor brand that's been a familiar fixture on farms since 1910. Can you identify it?

Take a close look at the tractor pictured below. (The photo has been re-touched to remove the company insignia and other markings.) See if you recognize the brand...model...or year.

For this special edition *only*, we've included the answer in the margin on

page 66. Normally, however, we don't print the answer until the following issue, so subscribers have the chance to win a prize in a fun drawing. If you become a subscriber to F&RL, our next winner could be *you*!

Like a Book? Hundreds of fascinating facts and bright color photos of vintage farm tractors can be found in the books *Classic American Farm Tractors* and *Thoro'bred Tractors*. If you're not an F&RL subscriber yet but would like a book, order one now!

Both books are available for \$15.98 each from Country Store, P.O. Box 612, Milwaukee WI 53201. Specify item no. **3055** for *Classic American Farm Tractors* or item no. **6273** for *Thoro'bred Tractors*.



MEANDERINGS

An orange Allis-Chalmers amid the pink petunias

"The 1931 Allis-Chalmers Model U was the first tractor offered for sale on pneumatic rubber tires in the United States. . . Rubber tires immediately increased drawbar pull 15 percent and fuel economy 25 percent over comparable steel-wheeled competitors."

—Randy Leffingwell,
"Classic Farm Tractors"

By Dennis Smith

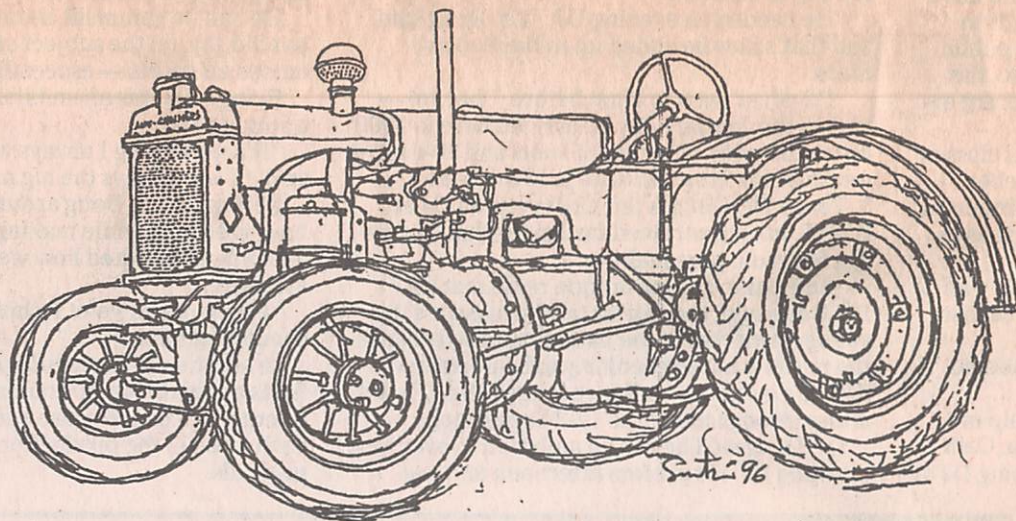
Young Paul could barely contain his excitement every afternoon on the dusty school bus as it bounced over the country roads north of Delta. On a lonely stretch, the bus finally stopped in front of the narrow lane that headed out through the fields toward the Stearns Ranch, which Paul's father had managed since a few years before the war.

The bus driver reached over and pulled the handle and the bus's accordion door popped open. Already standing at the rail, Paul was out the door with one leap and

down the lane like a bullet. . . .

The bus driver smiled as he pulled the door closed and lifted his foot off the clutch. That Theobald kid was a real one! The other kids called him "Cottontop" because of his light, sun-bleached hair. The kid was always in a hurry to get home, though the bus driver couldn't figure out why. With several hired hands and thousands of irrigated acres, the Stearns Ranch was certainly no place to play, and from the kid's suntanned skin it was obvious that he was a hard worker. Why he would be so anxious to get home to all that work was a mystery.

Halfway down the lane by now, Paul was already scanning the horizon, trying to see where his uncle would be plowing with the tractor. It was a bright orange Allis-Chalmers, bought new for the farm in 1936. It was a miracle to behold. Hooked up to the three-bottom plow, or to the old half-yard Michigan scraper, it could do the work of 10 or 15 teams of horses, surging through the desert earth like a knife through butter.



DENNIS SMITH

Every afternoon, when he got home from school, Paul's uncle would let him spell him on the tractor for the rest of the day. Paul never tired of driving it. He could go all night if only there were lights to see by—which would be a good thing, because there was always plenty to do since his two older brothers had gone off to the war, leaving Paul as the only son left to help his dad with the ranch.

□□□□

All this drifted back through Paul Theobald's mind as he stood on a high ladder stringing Christmas lights along the edge of his house on a bright November weekday. Retired now for several years, he pondered all that had happened over the 50 years since his father had left the Stearns Ranch to start his own farm in Hinckley, taking the orange Allis-Chalmers with him.

SMITH

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yet out on the end of her hose three firemen struggled to keep her nozzle from flipping free.

No wonder that in those old pictures I had seen they were rushing so crazily through the streets (the Roosevelt was pulled by three horses). These old pumpers were not nearly the timid wimps I had pictured them to be. At full power they could strip the wood siding off the top of a three-story building and pop bricks right out of their mortar.

As we were leaving, several members of the Bountiful Fire Department were dragging one of their co-workers — cell phone and all — toward the Roosevelt's wa-

tering trough. Two or three of local firemen had already been soaked to the skin as the midday demonstration was slowly turned into an excuse to beat the summer heat.

Out under the Roosevelt's stream, young mothers were cautiously venturing with the younger children in tow. Small rainbows of mist were popping here and there in the air around the engine.

And in the midst of everything like an old mother hen, Salt Lake City's restored Roosevelt, with an angelic human air about her, just kept pumping, as if she were reveling in the celebration — gleaming with pride at this new raft of attention she was receiving, and glad to be in service again after all these years.

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SMITH

Continued from C1

With a top speed of 10 miles per hour, it once possessed the distinction of being the first rubber-tired tractor in Millard County.

It would be interesting to ponder the turns Paul Theobald's life might have taken had he not been so in love with that tractor. Somehow, it fed an obsession with order that ruled the back of his mind; nothing fulfilled him so much as working the land, carving and contouring and turning the soil; and the old Allis-Chalmers permitted him to realize this dream.

Eventually, Paul went into the earth-moving business. Over the years he became the general contractor for the grading and construction of dams, roads and reservoirs, as well as grading building sites for new construction on major building projects throughout the state.

Some of the men who worked with Paul over the years would say that he had an eye for a level grade that could match any surveyor's transit, an in-born surveyor's bubble ("a bubble in his butt" they called it) that served him well through the years, providing a living for his family and a successful business that built up his community, too.

Paul lives in Orem now, at the crest of a hill above the community college for which he helped level and grade much of the land. It's not hard to find his house — it's the one with the orange tractor in front of it.

Several years ago, Paul had the old Allis-Chalmers moved up from Hinckley and plopped right in the middle of a petunia bed in front of his house, next to the mailbox, with a rich new coat of bright Allis-Chalmers' orange.

The neighbors didn't seem to mind the new addition. In fact, Paul positioned the antique tractor so the neighborhood kids could play on it. He figured it was a way of sharing his own childhood with them, especially since it represents a way of life that few kids can experience anymore. Not to mention the memories it brings back.

Every time he looks at it, like this afternoon, standing on the ladder stringing Christmas lights along the eaves of his house, he remembers how exciting it felt so long ago, running home from the school bus and looking for his uncle out there on the broad fields and listening for the familiar sound of the old Allis-Chalmers.

Dennis Smith is an artist and writer living in Highland, Utah County. "Meanderings: A Place to Grow," a compilation of his Deseret News columns, is available in local bookstores.